

July 3, 2003

James Fulton, Field Office Director
Office of Surface Mining
Western Regional Coordinating Center
Reclamation and Enforcement
1999 Broadway, Suite 3320
Denver, Colorado 80202-5733

Re: Modification to Experimental Practice, West Ridge Resources, Inc., West Ridge Mine, C/007/041-DO00A-7, Outgoing File

Dear Mr. Fulton:

You may recall that during construction of the West Ridge Mine an experimental practice was employed to protect the in-place topsoil on 16.75 acres of the 29acre site. The Regional Director of OSM approved the Experimental Practice on March 18, 1999. West Ridge Resources, Inc. is now proposing to alter the experimental practice. By Utah rule R645-302-218 this requires OSM concurrence if the change is determined to be a significant alteration in the experimental practice. The Division is hereby seeking the Office of Surface Mining's determination on whether or not the proposed change constitutes a significant alteration in the experimental practice.

During construction of the mine entry at West Ridge Resources Inc., burned coal was encountered, and the mine created a larger portal cut face (85ft X 300 ft) than was contemplated in the original Mining and Reclamation Plan. In order to achieve a more stable slope at reclamation, West Ridge Resources, Inc. has proposed an alternative backfilling plan around the area of the portals, which encroaches into the experimental practice area. Details are discussed below.

West Ridge Resources, Inc. has provided the Division with a backfilling plan to create a slope that is about 31.2 to 33.6 degrees (approximately 2.5h:1v), extending the toe of the slope to the northwest into the existing experimental practice topsoil storage location, requiring a 40 foot lateral displacement of the reclaimed stream channel for a distance of 450 feet. This would affect the experimental practice between cross sections 24+00 and 27+00 shown on Map 5-9. Pre-construction photographs number 34, 35 and 36 located on Map 5-13E show the pre-disturbance soils of the area to be removed from the experimental practice (enclosed).

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The area of buried topsoil to be affected would be 400 ft x 80 ft or approximately 0.74 acres. By Division calculations this represents 15.5% of the buried topsoil portion of the experimental practice. The remaining 4.01 acres of buried topsoil would be reclaimed as described in Appendix 2-6 of the MRP at the time of reclamation.

There would be no increase in the total disturbed area according to the cross sections shown in Map 2 of Appendix 5-10 of the proposal.

The Division is of the opinion that the successful revegetation of the site takes precedence over the experimental practice and that a loss of 0.74 acres of buried topsoil from the experimental practice is not significant to the outcome of the experimental practice. Topsoil on the 0.74 acres of Strych and Midfork soils will be harvested from the area prior to reclamation of the highwall, resulting in no net loss in topsoil recovery. The potential volume of recovery is 1,300 to 1,700 cu yds.

Please provide the Division with your assessment of the significance of this change to the experimental practice. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (801) 538-5306.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Wright
Associate Director

Pwb/an
Enclosure
cc Ranvir Singh, OSM
 Bob Postle, OSM
 Price Field Office
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